

REMARKS

Claims 9-19 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 9, 18 and 19 are amended. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. THE DECEMBER 2 PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Applicant thanks Examiner Gravini for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the December 2 Personal Interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the Personal Interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

As requested by Examiner Gravini during the December 2 Personal Interview, Applicant has amended claim 9 so that it is directed to a method of operating a home appliance. Claim 18, which depends from claim 9, is amended to agree with the amended language in claim 9. In addition, minor formatting changes have been made to claims 9 and 19. Because these changes merely address matters of form, it is respectfully submitted that the changes do not require further consideration and/or search. Accordingly, entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

III. CLAIMS 9-12 AND 16-18

The Office Action rejects claims 9-12 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Weichselgartner (U.S. Patent No. 4, 741,882). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Weichselgartner reference is directed to an apparatus used to extract radioactive gases such, as tritium, from closed working spaces such as an experimental glove box or a caisson. Figure 1 of this reference discloses the basic configuration for the system. As shown therein, an experimental working space 14 would house experimental activities which produce radioactive gases such as tritium. The inlets to first and second sorption chambers 28a and 28b can be selectively coupled to the interior of the working space 14 by a set of pipes 22 and inlet valves 24a, 24b.

The outlets of the first and second sorption chambers 28a, 28b can either be coupled back into the working space 14, or to the inlet of a common unit 12, which is used to collect the undesirable radioactive gases. If the outlets of the sorption chambers 28a and 28b are to be coupled back into the working space, a first set of outlet valves 30a, 30b are opened to couple the outlets of the sorption chambers to the intake line 40 passing into the working space, and a second set of outlet valves 32a, 32b are closed. Alternatively, if the outlets of the sorption chambers 28a, 28b are to be coupled to the common unit 12, the first set of outlet valves 30a, 30b are closed, and the second set of outlet valves 32a, 32b are opened.

Weichselgartner explains that each sorption chamber can be operated in two different modes. During an absorption/adsorption mode, air from the working space 14 is blown by the blower 20 into the bottom of a sorption chamber, and radioactive gasses from the working space 14 are absorbed by a sorption medium within the sorption chamber. During the absorption/adsorption mode, once the air has passed through the sorption chamber, it is returned to the working space via the first set of outlet valves 30a, 30b and the intake line 40.

The second mode is a desorption mode. When a sorption chamber is operating in a desorption mode, the intake valve 24a/24b is closed, and the first outlet valve 30a/30b is closed, to thereby isolate the sorption chamber from the working space 14. One of the second outlet valves 32a/32b is opened, to couple the sorption chamber to the common unit 12. One or more pumps 52, 54 in the common unit 12 draw any in the sorption chamber into the common unit 12, creating a vacuum-like condition in the sorption chamber. This causes the radioactive gasses that have been absorbed/adsorbed in the sorption chamber to be removed from the sorption medium in the sorption chamber, and these radioactive gases are collected in the common unit 12.

Weichselgartner explains that when one sorption chamber is operating in the absorption/adsorption mode to collect radioactive gases from the working chamber, the other sorption chamber can be operating in the desorption mode to deliver its collected

radioactive gases to the common unit. This ensures that at any given time, at least one of the sorption chambers is available to collect radioactive gases from the working space.

For instance, if the first sorption chamber 28a were operating in the absorption/adsorption mode, when sensors indicate that the sorption medium within the first sorption chamber 28a is no longer effective at removing the radioactive gases, the inlet valve 24a and outlet valve 30a would be closed, and the outlet valve 32a would be opened. This isolates the first sorption chamber 28a from the working space 14, and couples the first sorption chamber 28a to the common unit 12. At the same time, the inlet valve 24b and outlet valve 30b would be opened, and the outlet valve 32b would be closed. This couples the second sorption chamber 28b to the working space. Once these connections have been made, the common unit can cause the first sorption chamber 28a to operate in a desorption mode, so that radioactive gases collected in the sorption material of the first sorption chamber 28a can be delivered into the common unit 12. At the same time, the second sorption chamber 28b can operate in a absorption/adsorption mode to collect radioactive gases from the working space 14. And when sensors indicate that the second sorption chamber 28b is no longer being effective at removing radioactive gases from the working space 14, the above listed connections can be reversed to cause the second sorption chamber to deliver its collected radioactive gases to the common unit while the first sorption chamber 28a is again coupled to the working space 14.

Independent claim 9 is directed to a method for operating a device that includes two steps. Claim 9 recites that during the first step, air is drawn through a sorption column, and a reversibly dehydratable material within the sorption column withdraws moisture from the air passing through the sorption column. Claim 9 further recites that during this step, the air leaving the sorption column is delivered to a treatment chamber.

Claim 9 recites that the second step comprises effecting desorption of the reversible dehydratable material in the sorption column. Claim 9 recites that during this second step, air is drawn through the sorption column by an air accelerator. Claim 9 also recites that during this step the air passing through the sorption column is subjected to heating. Claim 9 further recites that after the air has been heated during its passage through the sorption

chamber, the air is guided into the treatment chamber. Finally, claim 9 recites that the air guided into the treatment chamber heats either a treatment liquid to be applied to items in the treatment chamber, or the items themselves.

It is respectfully submitted that the Weichselgartner reference fails to disclose a method that includes either of the steps recited in claim 9.

With respect to the first step, it is clear that Weichselgartner does not contemplate subjecting items retained in a device to a drying step. Although it is true that Weichselgartner contemplates drawing air through a sorption chamber and then returning that air into a treatment chamber, the air circulating through the treatment chamber and the sorption chamber is not used to conducting a drying operation.

But more importantly, Weichselgartner teaches away from a method that includes the second step of claim 9. To begin with, and as explained above, when Weichselgartner is operating one of his sorption chambers 28a in a desorption mode, Weichselgartner is not drawing air from either the atmosphere or a treatment chamber through the sorption chamber. Instead, Weichselgartner teaches that the inlet to the sorption chamber should be sealed, and that one or more pumps should then remove all substantially all of the air from within the sorption chamber, creating a vacuum-like condition in the sorption chamber.

In addition, and as also explained above, during Weichselgartner's desorption step the air being removed from the sorption chamber is not being guided into a treatment chamber. Instead, the air drawn out of the sorption chamber is being sent to the common unit 12, where the radioactive materials are collected. This means that during Weichselgartner's desorption step, the air exiting the sorption chamber is not being used to heat a treatment liquid or an item in a treatment chamber, as recited in claim 9. And, in fact, Weichselgartner would never send air being removed from a sorption chamber during a desorption step back into the working space, since this would simply return the radioactive gases collected in the sorption medium back in the working space, which would destroy the whole point and purpose of Weichselgartner's method and apparatus.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that not only does Weichselgartner not disclose or suggest a method as recited in claim 9, Weichselgartner

actually teaches away from a method that includes the second step of claim 9. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 9 is allowable over Weichselgartner. Claims 10-12 and 16-18 depend from claim 9 and are allowable for the same reasons, and for the additional features which they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9-12 and 16-18 is respectfully requested.

IV. CLAIMS 13-15

The Office Action rejects claims 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Weichselgartner, in view of Tuck (U.S. Patent No. 3,034,221). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 13-15 depend from claim 9. As explained above, Weichselgartner fails to disclose or suggest all the features of claim 9, and actually teaches away from the method of claim 9. Tuck fails to cure the deficiencies of Weichselgartner. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 13-15 are allowable for all the reasons discussed above, and for the additional features which they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 13-15 is respectfully requested.

V. CLAIM 19

The Office Action rejects claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Weichselgartner, in view of Chamberlain (U.S. Patent No. 2,633,928). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 19 is directed to a method of operating a dishwasher. Claim 19 recites a desorption step which is very similar to the desorption step of claim 9 discussed above. As noted above, Weichselgartner fails to disclose or suggest a desorption step as recited in claim 19. Chamberlain fails to cure this deficiency of Weichselgartner. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 19 is allowable for the reasons similar to those discussed above in connection with claim 9. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 is respectfully requested.

VI. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 9-19 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

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